



**VOL. 4**

People & Creation

# MILESTONES

Connecting God's Word to Life





**VOL. 4**

People & Creation

# MILESTONES

Connecting God's Word to Life



## Student Ministry Publishing

**Ben Trueblood**

*Director, Student Ministry*

**John Paul Basham**

*Manager, Student Ministry Publishing*

**Karen Daniel**

*Editorial Team Leader*

**Andy McLean**

*Content Editor*

**Stephanie Livengood**

*Production Editor*

**Amy Lyon**

*Graphic Designer*

© 2019 LifeWay Press®

No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system, except as may be expressly permitted in writing by the publisher.

Requests for permission should be addressed in writing to LifeWay Press®,  
One LifeWay Plaza, Nashville, TN 37234.

ISBN: 978-1-5359-6586-6

Item Number: 005816982

Dewey Decimal Classification Number: 204  
Subject Heading: RELIGION/ RELIGIOUS  
EXPERIENCE, LIFE, AND PRACTICE

Printed in the United States of America.

Student Ministry Publishing  
LifeWay Resources  
One LifeWay Plaza  
Nashville, TN 37234

We believe that the Bible has God for its author; salvation for its end; and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter and that all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. To review LifeWay's doctrinal guideline, please visit [www.lifeway.com/doctrinalguideline](http://www.lifeway.com/doctrinalguideline).

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from the Christian Standard Bible®, Copyright ©2017 by Holman Bible Publishers. Used by permission. Christian Standard Bible® and CSB® are federally registered trademarks of Holman Bible Publishers.

# Table of **CONTENTS**

INTRODUCTION .....	4
HOW TO USE .....	5
SESSION 1: The Testimony of Creation .....	6
SESSION 2: The Orderliness of Creation .....	16
SESSION 3: Made in God's Image .....	26
SESSION 4: Consequences of Sin .....	36
SESSION 5: Knowing God's Will .....	46
SESSION 6: Becoming Like Jesus .....	56
SESSION 7: Living By The Spirit .....	66
SESSION 8: Filled With Joy .....	76
LEADER GUIDE .....	86

# MILESTONES / INTRODUCTION

*Milestones* was developed by the creators of *Bible Studies for Life: Students*, which exists to point students and student leaders to the application of biblical teaching to everyday life through weekly group Bible studies and additional resources. Every lesson within *Bible Studies for Life* contains a bible study that points students to Jesus, is rooted in Scripture, and provides application for living in today's context. The topics and subjects chosen in each quarter of *Bible Studies for Life* fit within a larger framework called *Levels of Biblical Learning*. *Levels of Biblical Learning* consists of ten theological topics we believe students should grasp before graduating high school. These include:



Within these ten topics are 52 theological statements, which make up the core content students would be exposed to and learn each year as they go through *Bible Studies for Life*. The quarterly topics and Scripture passages that make up each lesson in *Bible Studies for Life* are tied the framework of *Levels of Biblical Learning*, which guides the Scripture selection.

While we are able to connect students to the *Levels of Biblical Learning* and the theological statements in each lesson of *Bible Studies for Life*, we wanted to provide a resource capable of going deep into the weight and significance these levels have for personal faith and discipleship. This is what *Milestones* seeks to do. Over the course of six volumes, each of the 52 theological statements will be explored in depth, noting both the theological importance and personal application each has for everyday life. By going through these six volumes, we hope students will grow in their personal knowledge and understanding of God and His world. We also pray that God will use these resources to equip another generation to boldly proclaim the truth of the gospel in a world where Jesus—the truth—is desperately needed.

# MILESTONES / HOW TO USE

This Bible-study book includes eight weeks of content for group and personal study. Each session is divided into the following components:

## ENGAGE

---

Each session opens with a *Levels of Biblical Learning Statement*, which gives an overview of the session's topic. Following the statement, each session contains an introduction to help your group as you begin your time together, setting up a natural transition into the material for each week.

## DISCUSS

---

The Discuss section expands upon the *Levels of Biblical Learning Statement*. During this time, groups will explore Scripture, answer questions, and engage with additional content to help explain the session statement.

## LIVE IT OUT

---

The Live It Out section is designed to close out your group time by calling out three specific points of application under the headings of Christ, Community, and Culture. By doing so, this section seeks to demonstrate specifically what the session material teaches us about Christ, how to live in Community, and how to engage with Culture.

## DOING, BEING, AND APOLOGETIC STATEMENTS

This section also contains Doing, Being, and Apologetic statements. These statements are directly related to the *Levels of Biblical Learning Statement*, and provide opportunity for the group to expand on what these doctrinal truths communicate about us as individuals, how we are to live, and how we might engage culture apologetically.

## DEVOTIONS

---

Three personal devotions are provided for each session to take students deeper into Scripture and to supplement the content introduced in the group study. With biblical teaching and introspective questions, these sections challenge students to grow in their understanding of God's Word and to respond in faith.

## LEADER GUIDE

---

At the back of this book, you'll find a leader guide to help you prepare each week. This guide will help you gain a broad understanding of the content and learn ways to engage with students throughout your time together.

# THE TESTIMONY OF CREATION

# 1



## LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING STATEMENT



*God is Creator, and all creation is a result of His work and exists to glorify Him. Creation testifies to the existence of God, and because His power and nature are understood through what He has made, people are without excuse for their disbelief and disobedience.*

What do Superman, Spider-man, the Hulk, and Batman have in common? Sure, they are all fictional comic book characters. Yes, they all possess remarkable abilities. But something even more unique to these superheroes is the fact that they choose to keep their identity hidden. They go to great lengths to keep their true identity hidden from the majority of the world, only revealing their true selves to a small and intimate group of friends.

Of course, keeping secrets and hiding things about oneself isn't exclusive to the world of comic books—real people do this every day. For good or bad, people are desperate to keep secrets and hide things about themselves from even those closest to them. People's reasons for hiding their identity vary. But maybe this makes you wonder: Does God keep His identity from us? Are we left in the dark wondering about His character and purpose for creating us? Absolutely not! God's work of creation is a testimony to His desire to be both known and glorified among His creation.

**In what ways has God purposefully revealed Himself and His glory to His people? To you personally?**



## **GOD IS THE CREATOR OVER ALL CREATION**

***Read Genesis 1:1 and Colossians 1:16.***

**What did God use to create the world?**

**What things fall under the category of “creation”?**

**What does “all things have been created through Him and for Him” mean? Who is this verse talking about?**

When the Bible talks about God’s creation of the universe, it is referring to things both visible and invisible. When we say God created all visible things, it’s another way to say God created everything in the material (physical) universe out of nothing. This includes everything from planets and people to the atoms and molecules that make them up. When we say God created all things invisible, we affirm that God also created immaterial things (not made up of physical parts), such as the human soul. In other words, there isn’t anything in existence—material or immaterial—that doesn’t find its origin in God Himself.

Because God created the entire universe—material and immaterial—all of creation is completely dependent upon Him for its existence. Sure, there are some who think nature has ultimate control, often hinted at in the phrase “Mother Nature.” But this is clearly mistaken. If God is the author of creation, this means He is not only sovereign over all parts of it, but He also uses it to accomplish His purposes and will. Creation points us to a loving and sovereign God, bearing the marks of His power and goodness much like a potter leaving fingerprints in his own work.

***Now, read Psalm 19:1-4.***

**What evidence of God do you see in creation?**

**What are some ways creation reveals God’s glory?**



## THE BEGINNING OF CREATION POINTS TO A CREATOR

---

***Read John 1:1-3 and Revelation 4:11.***

**What ways did John say Jesus was involved in creation? What does this communicate about Jesus' identity?**

**What makes God worthy to receive “glory and honor and power” (Rev. 4:11)?**

One of the most remarkable facts about the universe is that it had a beginning. Far from being eternal like some atheists would have us think, creation itself had a starting point sometime in the past. In fact, some of the most secular theories of the origins of the universe claim that the world began at a certain time (despite the debate on exactly when that took place). When the scientific establishment proposed the “Big Bang” as a theory for the origin of the universe, atheists were quite nervous since this theory argues for a literal beginning of the universe. A beginning implies something or Someone behind it. This isn't an argument for the legitimacy of the Big Bang theory as a model for the origins of the universe; instead, the point is that even the scientific community recognizes that the universe had a beginning. Since we know for sure things don't pop into existence from nothing, the beginning of the universe points to its cause and origin in something outside itself, namely God.

## CREATION POINTS TO CERTAIN ASPECTS OF GOD'S CHARACTER

---

***Read Romans 1:18-25.***

**What do all of us know about God? How do we know this?**

**What are God's "invisible attributes"?**

**What do you think Paul meant by the phrase "people are without excuse"?**

**How have you seen God's goodness in creation? His power?**

There's no doubt that creation serves to point back to its Maker as a work of art points to the artist. Creation serves to testify and bear witness to God's beauty, sovereignty, and glory. Finally, creation itself because of its very existence provides a powerful argument for the existence of God and a persuasive counter-argument against atheists who don't believe.

But there is one more biblical truth we must explore about creation. Paul says people are without excuse because God hasn't hidden Himself but revealed Himself in creation (Rom. 1–2). In other words, people can't say they didn't know at least something about God from the simple observation of the created order and their own consciences. This is often called general revelation because it refers to the general knowledge about God and His character that can be gained by observing and reflecting on the vastness of the universe or looking within to our intuitive sense of right and wrong. We can't gain tons of personal knowledge about God through general revelation—which is why we need the special revelation of Jesus and Scripture—but we can gain enough knowledge to be held accountable. Instead of taking that knowledge and moving toward God for deeper understanding, Paul says our tendency is to ignore it. We ignore it and even show how indifferent we are to the knowledge of God's existence by living in direct opposition to the way He would have us live. And because of this, we are accountable and without excuse.



**BEING** // God created a universe which was whole and good, but humanity's sin brought brokenness, pain, and relational separation between God and people. However, those who are part of God's family are new creations in Christ, and will dwell with God in the new heavens and earth.

**DOING** // As those whom God has entrusted with the responsibility of overseeing His creation, we should steward well all the things God gives us in a way that honors Him and points others to Jesus.

**APOLOGETIC** // God created the world, therefore, it belongs to Him. Upon placing people in the garden, He called us to rule over the world as an expression of His authority. Because we have the responsibility of caring for the world and all its resources, we must steward it well as God would.

## CHRIST

---

As Paul stated in Colossians 1, all things have been created by Christ and for Christ. Think about that. Everything from Saturn's rings to pepperoni pizza has been created by Jesus and for the praise of Jesus. This is the purpose of all creation. In fact, Isaiah 43:6-7 says, "Bring my sons from far away, and my daughters from the ends of the earth—everyone who bears my name and is created for my glory." We, like the rest of creation, were created to glorify God. And the great news is that we, unlike the rest of creation, get to do so in a unique way—by bearing His image and reflecting Him in all we do.

**How are you seeking to glorify (make much of) Jesus in the rhythms of your life?**

## COMMUNITY

---

When we think about creation our attention is usually directed upward to galaxies and solar systems. However, the vastness of those aspects of creation should never overshadow other parts of God's creation that are even more valuable and meaningful, although smaller in size. One of those being the creation and gift of friendship and community God originally designed in the opening chapters of Genesis. It was always clear from God's design that humans were intended to thrive in community with each other. We have been hardwired for community, and deep down each of us want to belong. Having meaningful relationships are extremely important if we are to grow in Christ-likeness. And we should be extremely grateful when those meaningful relationships in our lives happen.

**What are some of the most meaningful relationships in your life? Why do you consider them meaningful?**

## CULTURE

---

The fact that creation isn't eternal but had a beginning in time and space is a momentous argument in favor of the Christian worldview. As mentioned before, atheists can't give an answer as to why something is here rather than nothing, and they can't explain through science or plain reason how something can come from nothing. But the Christian worldview has the advantage here. We can affirm that creation had a beginning and offer an explanation as to the cause (God) that brought it into existence.

**How can you use that the Universe had a beginning as evidence of a Creator?**

Session 1

---

# DEVOTIONS

---

# BEAUTY IN CREATION

---

There are many aspects of creation that serve absolutely no practical purpose. They are simply art. They exist only for the purposes of beauty and beauty is not insignificant. Beauty speaks about God's heart. He is our beautiful Savior and we sinners may be made beautiful by His unending grace. Though our sins are like scarlet, we may be washed white as snow. Though we live now in the midst of a broken Eden, He will make all things new one day. Even in its sin-stained state, creation still bears the marks of its original exquisite form.

*He has made everything appropriate in its time. He has also put eternity in their hearts, but no one can discover the work God has done from beginning to end.*

**ECCLESIASTES 3:11**

There is incredible beauty in this life, but why? They all hint at our beautiful Creator. He made us creative because He is the Creator. How many plants exist just for us to behold in wonder or taste and enjoy? All of these are good and perfect gifts from our Father of the heavenly lights.

**What does the beauty of creation tell us about God's nature?**

**Is God beautiful? What is the biblical basis for your answer?**

**How might the existence of beauty point unbelievers to God's existence?**

## THE CREATOR OF BEAUTY

---

After Job's world was rocked by a massive demonic attack ending his family, destroying all of his possessions, and even taking away his health, Job's friends showed up and told him these horrific events were the result of hidden sin within Job's life. Then, God spoke to silence them and the results are spectacular.

*"Where were you when I established the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who fixed its dimensions? Certainly you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? What supports its foundations? Or who laid its cornerstone while the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Who enclosed the sea behind doors when it burst from the womb, when I made the clouds its garment and total darkness its blanket, when I determined its boundaries and put its bars and doors in place, when I declared: 'You may come this far, but no farther; your proud waves stop here'? Have you ever in your life commanded the morning or assigned the dawn its place?"*

**JOB 38:4-12**

As much as we are overwhelmed by the beauty of creation, we cannot fathom just how deep that beauty goes. There is beauty we do not yet know. As our understanding of the universe increases, so do the reasons to praise God for its beauty.

**The breathtaking beauty of this earth is actually nothing compared to its true sinless and original form. What do you think the differences are between sunsets now and sunsets when God makes everything new?**

**Look around you right now. Describe an example of beauty in creation you have never noticed until this moment.**

# HIDDEN BEAUTY

---

When the microscope was invented, we discovered an entirely new realm of beauty we did not previously understand. It seems that, the smaller things are, the more complex they are. That beauty was all around us for the whole of human history up to that point, but it was completely unknown to us.

Small things carry incredible beauty. Consider the flower. Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, used flowers to teach us something about how much God values us.

*“And why do you worry about clothes? Observe how the wildflowers of the field grow: They don’t labor or spin thread. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was adorned like one of these.”*

**MATTHEW 6:28-29**

This New Testament teaching carries the tradition in marveling at the beauty of creation in the human form.

*For it was you who created my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I will praise you because I have been remarkably and wondrously made. Your works are wondrous, and I know this very well.*

**PSALM 139:13-14**

**Where do you suspect we will discover the next level of beauty in God’s creation?**

**Will that beauty lead more people to faith in God? Why, or why not?**



# LEADER GUIDE / SESSION 1

## ENGAGE

---

Start the session by reading the *Levels of Biblical Learning Statement* on page 6. Then, use the introduction provided as a way to begin your group time before transitioning to the Discuss section.

## DISCUSS

---

Be sure to read the Discuss section on pages 7-9 before coming together as a group. Doing so will allow you to be familiar with the material and will help you select which portions of the material you would like to cover in the allotted amount of group time. Look for places in the Discuss section where you can add a personal anecdote to a question or a Scripture passage to share in addition to what has been provided. Making preparations like these will help your group time run more smoothly and be more effective in the end.

## LIVE IT OUT

---

After your group works through the Discuss section, take some time to move through the application found in the Live It Out section on pages 10-11. Look for specific, personal ways you can connect with the material from your own past. Sharing a personal story or illustration that connects with the lesson is a great way to connect with students and creates an atmosphere where students also feel comfortable sharing.

## WEEKLY LEADER TIPS

---

- Introduce the personal devotions that follow Session 1, and remind students to complete the session devotions on pages 12-15 before your next meeting.
- Challenge students to memorize the Levels of Biblical Learning Statement for Session 1.
- Encourage students to be in the habit of building into their personal prayer lives with what they have learned this week.

## WEEKLY LEADER NOTES

---